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UNTIL ALL ARE FREE

THE TRIAL STATEMENT OF RAY LUC LEVASSEUR

ATTACK
INTERNATIONAL

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1 Introduction

On Sunday 4th November 1984, a crack police task force surrounded a van in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. The 50 officers, armed with submachine guns and shotguns, arrested the van's 5 occupants: for years, they had been among the most wanted people in the USA. Their photographs and descriptions had been circulated all across the country. The warrants for their arrest listed a number of bombings that they had carried out against military, judicial and economic institutions. Together with 2 other defendents, they became known as the Ohio 7.

But their real "crime" was much greater than any number of bombings: together they had seen through the lies and illusions of 'the American way of life', a way of life that is worldwide. They had come to realise through their own experiences that this way of life has nothing to do with 'democracy', 'freedom' and 'justice'. That it is a way of life based on brutality, exploitation and repression. And, most importantly of all, they had come to believe that this way of life could and should be changed. It was for this belief that they were seized back in 1984.

One of the van's occupants was a man called Ray Luc Levasseur. Levasseur came from a poor, immigrant working class background. Born on 10th October 1940, he left school at 17 and worked first in the local mills and then as a docker in Boston. In 1967, at the height of the war in Vietnam, he joined the US Army. His experiences in Vietnam were a turning point for him, as it was for many other Americans.

Levasseur left the Army in 1968 and entered the class war back home. It was this decision that led to his arrest in November 1984. Along with 6 others, he was charged with over 70 offences, ranging from bombings to seditious conspiracy. In 1986, all 7 were found guilty of most of the charges and sentenced to terms from 5 years to 83 years plus life. Ray Luc Levaseur himself was sentenced to 45 years in prison. The state alleged that the 7 were "gangsters" and "criminal terrorists". Levasseur freely admitted to being part of a revolutionary movement. He even admitted being part of a "conspiracy" - one that he had joined the minute he was born into a working class family.

In January 1989 Levasseur and 4 others went on trial again. This time, they were charged with seditious conspiracy and "racketeering influenced corrupt organisations" (a legal offence supposedly introduced to deal with the Mafia). The speech that we have reprinted here was made by Levasseur at the opening of this trial. There are ideas in it which we disagree with and it might not be phrased to everyone's taste. But it is a document that has many lessons for all of us. We have printed it not because we believe in bombings or clandestine activity - as a general rule, we don't. We have printed it because it is a moving and inspiring declaration of war against a society that places profit before human need. It is one man's story of how he became a revolutionary.

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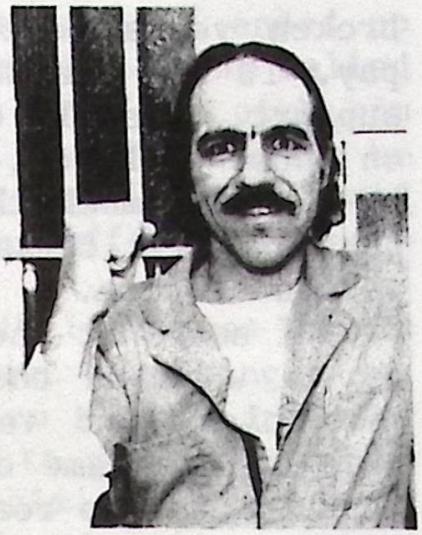
October 1989



2
Early Days

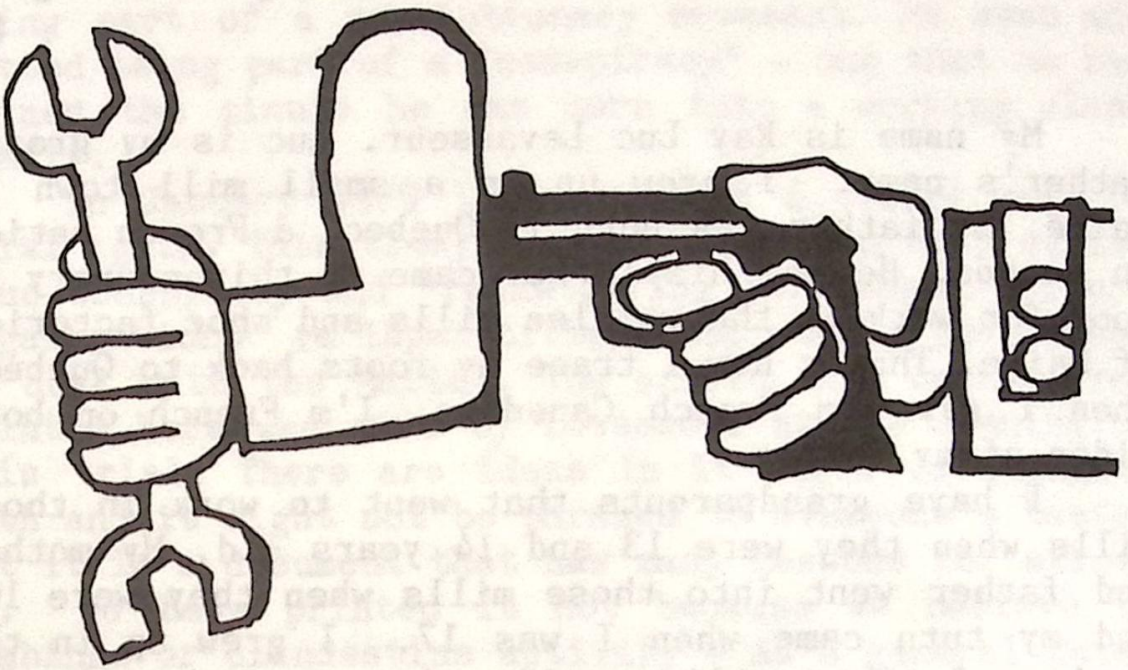
My name is Ray Luc Levasseur. Luc is my grandfather's name. I grew up in a small mill town in Maine. My father was born in Quebec, a French nation in Canada. He and his father came to this country to look for work in the woollen mills and shoe factories of Maine. That's how I trace my roots back to Quebec. When I say I'm French Canadian, I'm French on both sides of my family.

I have grandparents that went to work in those mills when they were 13 and 14 years old. My mother and father went into those mills when they were 16. And my turn came when I was 17. I grew up in the shadow of those mills really, because not only did they leave an impression on me, an imprint on my life and my thinking, but I literally lived within those shadows; we used to have a little apartment across the street from a shoe shop.

I worked in a mill when I was 17 where we made heels for shoes. I worked with primarily French Canadian people, people who didn't have much education. I didn't have much good education myself at the time. It was non-unionised labour. All the unions had been

broken years earlier by runaway shops. It was low pay. It was the kind of money that was difficult to support a family on. We were subjected to speed ups on those machines. They would crank those machines up to however much they wanted, so that you would have to produce a certain number of heels in a specified period of time.

I saw what the future was going to look like for me to work in those mills. And that future became very clear and very glaring when a school chum of mine by the name of Albert Glaude, who worked in the mill across the road, got his arm caught in the machine one day and he was choked to death. Just six months earlier he had been in school with us and the next thing you know he was dead, and those machines killed him. They can kill you very quickly or take a long time to do it.



And I say this because I was very close to my grandparents. My memere, my grandmother, she was like a second mother to me. And my grandfather worked in those mills year after year after year. This was a man I had a great deal of respect for. I used to stand up to his knee, and what I saw happen was I saw his life begin to be devastated by the kind of work that he was subjected to, to the point of where his health was broken down. What happened was a man to

whom I once stood only up to his knee, I ended up holding in my arms. I remember one time being called out to the chicken coop where he lived to pick him off the floor because he couldn't stand up after he had fallen down. Working in those woollen mills and shoe shops had that type of eroding effect on a person year after year.

We brought him to the VA hospital because he was a World War One vet. But I found out something else: if you don't have health care from a good union or something, then you are not going to get it from the VA, because they just warehoused him. So we brought him back home to die. And that is what happened to him. He died. And I always thought that those mills had a big part in killing him.

I wanted to escape that destiny. What I saw was a dead end. So at 17 I went to Boston. I started working on the loading docks. And over the years, all my life really, I've done that kind of work. I've worked as a farm labourer and logger. I've worked in factories and mills.

You heard about overt acts from the judge during the instruction. An overt act. That you have to take a step in a conspiracy, you actually have to do something for it to happen. My first overt act in this alleged conspiracy is I was born into a particular class of workers that was severely exploited and subjected to certain kinds of conditions. And that left an imprint on my mind that I was going to have to do something about it, when a factory owner puts more value on his profits than your health and life. I think that those are priorities that need to be changed.

While I was in Boston all I used to read was the sports pages when I rode the subway on the way to work. So I didn't know anything about what was going on over in Southeast Asia. There was a war going on at the time called Vietnam. And the way I grew up was to love my country. Even though I felt like I was being totally exploited in the work that I was doing at the time. I felt I had an obligation to serve my country like my father and my uncles and my grandfather.

I enlisted in the Army in 1967. I went to Vietnam and I served a full tour of duty, 12 months. And what I saw there was another side of war. Not some Hollywood production, not some Rambo type of thing that they feed young guys so they can manipulate them into the military and use them. I saw another side of US foreign policy. Bombings, killings, search and destroy, devastation, poverty, hunger. I was part of a foreign occupation Army. I saw human rights violations when I was there, and I saw violations of international law. And I've been to Bien Hoa, I've been to Long Binh, I've been to Xuan Loc, I've been to Bear Cat. I've been around areas around the Iron Triangle. I've been to Saigon. I've been to base camps like Black Horse. While I was there I did flying in helicopters, so I got a view of the country not only from the ground level but from the air. What I saw was a land that should have been supporting villages and farms and human life that was being totally destroyed. A wasteland. Bomb craters. Nothing but a couple of bushes or a downed helicopter here and there. And I saw the human suffering of the Vietnamese people, and in particular, women and children.

You're going to hear about weapons in this case. I came from an area in Maine where it was natural to grow up with a .22 or .410 shotgun, as I did. The first pistol I ever fired was in Vietnam. There will be a piece of evidence in here, because the FBI seized it, that shows a picture of me when I was 20 years old with automatic weapons. I'm standing there with an M-16 and an M-60 machine gun in front of a helicopter that says "Gang Busters" on it. Not gangsters, gang busters.

And that's the sort of role that I was asked to fulfil for this government. I was trained to kill. And I was fully armed and sent to Vietnam. You know, there's a lot of vets who came back with post-Vietnam stress disorder. I've worked with those veterans. I didn't suffer any mental illness or syndromes when I came back. I came back enraged by what I saw. To see open and blatant racism by white American soldiers towards Vietnamese people because of the colour of their skin or their religion or their culture,

their language, was shocking to me. I had never seen anything that devastating. And the Vietnamese are really beautiful people. To see young mothers forced to sell their 13 and 14 year old daughters into prostitution, so that American GI's could prey upon them, that was a shock to me. That was a shock to me, the way I was brought up, the values that I had and supposedly what my function was to be there.

One of the functions that I had there was to do security work. I had to guard Vietnamese who hadn't a security clearance. Mostly it was children, women and older folks, because the men were out there somewhere else. I was to make sure that they didn't go over towards the tents and leave a hand grenade or do some reconnaissance. But every time I saw them move off, what they were looking for was get near a trash can or garbage can, so they could take something to bring home to their families. I saw American soldiers die that I didn't even know because I was on the same convoy with them when we got hit. And I lost a good friend, Brin Griffen. He was 19 years old. He was killed near the end of my tour of duty. I came back on leave and I went to his funeral. This is a kid I used to drink wine with on the corners of Boston.

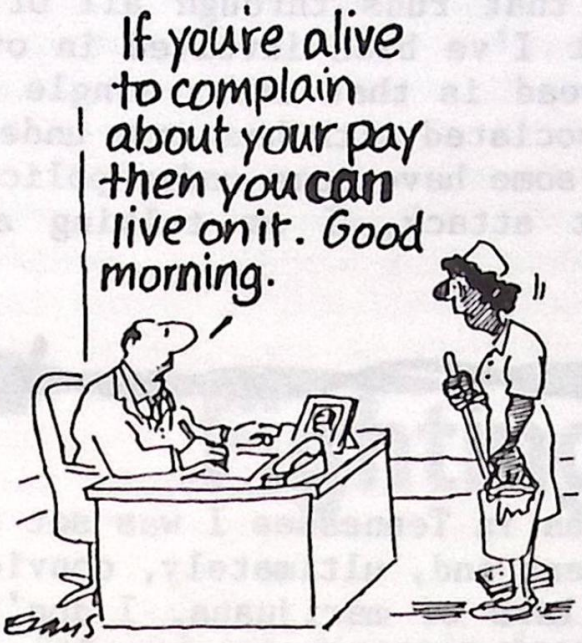
I wore my uniform out of respect for his family to his funeral. But I never wore my uniform with any pride again after that. Not after what I saw in Vietnam. I never saw so many missing arms and legs before we used to say that's the walking wounded. They're more valuable to us than dead Vietnamese because they can be seen every day by the other people as a warning of what happens if you oppose the United States government.

After Vietnam I asked the most seditious question of all: why? Why is this government committing crimes in our name? Why were so many of us from poor and working class backgrounds; why so many Black and Latino GI's over there told to do the killing and the fighting while the kids who have the money are going to the good schools in the United States? I wasn't coming back to a university. I was going to come back and face the prospect of going back and making some more heels for those shoes.

The blood of innocent people stirred my conscience and I'm going to ask it to move your conscience during this trial. I came back and I saw that the Vietnamese had a will to win, a will to fight. I wanted to do whatever I could to help bring that war to an end. It didn't take any great educated mind to figure out that children are innocent, whether they are Vietnamese or young Black children, or children of workers. But the United States government has never figured that into its policies.

I received an honourable discharge from the Army when I came back and I became politically active with the Southern Student Organising Committee in Tennessee. Educating people, mobilising people to oppose the war in Vietnam. We supported the unionisation of non-unionised workers. We were involved with organising support for attempts to unionise workers in meat packing plants throughout the south. If you've ever been in a meat packing plant, you'll understand you work under very unhealthy and unsafe conditions. This is not a union looking for higher wages. This is to get unionised and have the minimum basic protection that a worker should have. I've been in those plants,

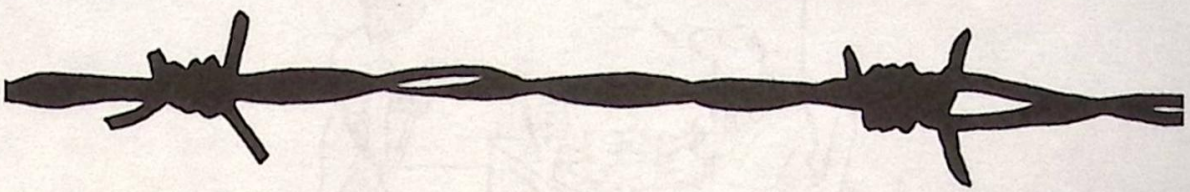
though I've not worked in them. But I have worked in a tannery and it's very similar. I've had to unload hides off pallets that had maggots eating on the flesh on one side of them. That's what they look like before they are turned into a pair of shoes or a leather jacket.



We made a connection between what was happening in Vietnam and some of the things that were happening in this country. And in particular, the Black liberation struggle at that time. The Civil Rights struggle the fight of black people to have decent housing and decent medical care. Jobs. The right to live life to its fullest potential. The right to be free from the fear of being attacked by the Ku Klux Klan or killer cops. We're going to hear a lot more about cops who kill unarmed Black and Latino people in this trial.

I felt as a white working class person having seen some of the racism in the United States that I saw, that it was my responbility not to go to Black people and tell them what their agenda is. They were making it clear what they wanted. They wanted freedom. They made it clear in Watts, they made it clear in Detroit. Malcolm X was making it clear. My task was to organise white people to suport that struggle. And the union struggle was a multinational struggle of Black and white workers together, so that was part of our agenda.

In 1969 I was in Atlanta at the Ebenezer Baptist Church on the 1st anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, where we marched in support of civil rights as part of this organisation SSOC, while white racists stood on the sidelines and spat on us. These I call early resistance activities. There's going to be a thread that runs through all of the political activity that I've been involved in over the years, and that thread is that every single organisation I have been associated with has come under police surveillance and some have come under police attack. When I talk about attack, I am talking about physical attack.



When I was in Tennessee I was set up by a police undercover agent and, ultimately, convicted for selling seven dollars of marijuana. I don't condone drug use, and I worked later as a counsellor in drug programmes. But this was 1969. I had come back from Vietnam. Seven dollars worth of marijuana was nothing in Vietnam. It was openly used. I was a product of Vietnam. Seven dollars worth of marijuana was used to get me a five year maximum sentence. I had never been in prison before. No felony convictions. But because of my political activity, because I'm a person who doesn't have money to pay for a high-priced lawyer, because I can't influence the government, I was given that five year max. That's the price I had to pay for being a Vietnam veteran opposed to the war and opposed to racism.

3
Fighting Back

Something I found out directly from my experince is that jails and prisons are nothing more than concentration camps for poor people. And people of colour in particular. Black people in Tennessee, African-Americans. I saw that. The conditions in the Tennessee jails and prisons were horrible. They were brutalising. You had to struggle just to keep your humanity from slipping through your fingers as you try and survive from one day to the other. And we were mistreated in jail. I was in a county jail. They were feeding us very poorly, very bad food, and we began to get sick. We got intestinal sicknesses. We had weight losses. We finally couldn't stand it anymore, and we went on a food strike to see if we could improve the conditions. I was asked to speak for the prisoners to present our grievances to the administration.

The way I was rewarded for that was I found myself in the Tennessee State Penitentiary in Nashville classified as a "agitator", which I would call a political prisoner. It's a label that has stuck with me for the 21 years that I've been politically active.

I found that prison is nothing more than another kind of concrete and steel ghetto. The men I met in prison were there primarily for economic crimes. Taking because you haven't got a job. Taking because you do not have enough to provide for your family. Taking because you are part of a racist system that doesn't offer you any opportunity. The conditions were bad. I've seen prisoners cut themselves up. I wrote about this and the government seized these documents. I wrote about what it was like to sit in a cell and watch a 20 year old guy take a piece of glass six inches long and cut himself so he could go to hospital and get something decent to eat. But he made a mistake and cut himself a little too deep. So, he got hurt a lot more than he should have been. He miscalculated.

I write what it's like to read mail to another prisoner because he is illiterate and cannot read letters he's getting from his family. I have to write down for him , "I love you, wife", because he cannot write the words "I love you". He feels it, but he can't write them because he's illiterate.

In those Tennessee prisons we defied Jim Crow. I know some of you know who Jim Crow is: you eat racism, you sleep it, you walk it, they enforce it on you. Forced segregation by race. We fought that. Fought the Ku Klux Klan and we fought the administration. Most of the time you couldn't tell the difference between the two. They profited from dividing Black and white prisoners just like they profited in the union struggles from trying to divide Black and white. They were afraid of that solidarity. Again, the reward for that was banishment. Banishment to isolation cells. Segregation cells, solitary confinement. Eventually they put me in the ultimate solitary confinement, they put me on death row. At that time, they had made part of death row a segregation unit and that was the tightest place they could keep me so that's where they kept me, locked down 23 hours a day. I exercised one hour a day with people who were condemned to die. Most of them were Black and all of them were poor. I never met one who wasn't from a background of poverty. I learned a great deal from

these men. Black men who had grown up both in the urban and rural south at that time. That's when I was introduced to the ideas of Malcolm X. Malcolm X said to accelerate and advance the struggle from civil rights to human rights.

There was no work. Very little exercise. Never enough to eat. This had a great impact on my thinking. I was continually kept in isolation cells. I was kept out of contact with other prisoners. But the influence continued. It came to me through the pages of books I was reading: Marx, Lenin, Mao, Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Franz Fanon, Rosa Luxemburg, Emma Goldman, the writings of the Black Panther Party. This is how the struggle for social justice has become my life. I've gone into those factories, those mills, those fields; I've sweat for the boss and know what it's like. I was in the Army. I was in Vietnam. I had to serve this government when they required it. I've been in their jails and prisons. This is how I came to understand what I refer to as the class struggle and class conflict and this is how I became a revolutionary.

The banishment continued when I got out of prison. The only way I could leave prison was on the condition I leave the state of Tennessee. So I returned to my family in Maine where my mother and grandmother were living and I slept on a couch there. Started to work 10, 12 hour day. Making concrete blocks. Trying to save up some money to go to school, because I realised I had to get an education.

Then I became a state organiser for Vietnam Veterans Against the War. This was a period of time when the air war in Vietnam was raging. When tens of thousands of Vietnamese civilians were being killed on the orders of people like Nixon and Kissinger. VVAW had documentation about what was going on in Vietnam. We held investigations and we had compiled information from ourselves, because we were there. Pilots, ground soldiers, support troops. We knew what was going on there.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War became a real thorn in the side of the government. I was trying to put into practice what it meant to be a revolutionary. We were organising marches and demonstrations, speaking, educating, all over northern New England. And I went back to the Togus Veterans Administration Hospital where I had seen my grandfather so many years earlier, because I never forgot it. I went back on a hunch, and sure enough, we found a ward of young Vietnam veterans who were just warehoused there. VVAW came under police surveillance. And I am going to return to this theme because it's important. Every political organisation I have ever been associated with has come under police surveillance, and ultimately attacked.

When the war wound down, I began to work with other organisations that did work primarily with prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families. One of these organisations was called SCAR. With SCAR I was involved in putting together what we call survival programmes: survival pending significant social changes, survival pending revolutionary changes that would meet the needs of the people who suffer most from class and racist oppression. It was an adaption of what the Black Panther Party were doing at the

time. Our motto was: serve the people. And our programmes were always free to the people we served. SCAR is an organisation that I worked with at the time this alleged conspiracy began. I was directly involved in setting up literacy programmes in several county jails in southern Maine at the time, so we could teach prisoners how to read and write. And GED programmes, so they could get their high school diplomas. I was involved in drug counselling. And we set up a prisoners' union at the state prison. We provided free transportation to prison for families and friends of prisoners because they didn't have much money. We were involved in getting jobs for people. We were involved in getting temporary housing for people. We were involved in day care for children. We put out our own paper. We did support work for political prisoners. We monitored cases of police brutality in the community in which we lived.

There are two things about SCAR's work at that time that I think casts a different light on the organisation than the government's witness is going to. We worked in a neighbourhood coalition with other groups. We worked with people on welfare; we worked with tenants' rights people. I was involved in setting up two programes that came out of this coalition. We went to people and we said what can we do for you, what do you need? One of the things they said was our kids and young people and sometimes older people are being imprisoned and they can't get out

because they don't have the hundred dollars bail or two hundreds bail. So we organised what we called the Portland Community Bail Fund. Portland was the name of the community I lived in. That bail fund is still in existence today, 15 years later.

The other thing that I was involved with was kids in the projects. The kids were drinking a lot, doing drugs, and there was a problem with the cops. Mothers said the kids were losing respect for them. Primarily, women were raising these kids in the projects. They came to SCAR for help. At the time I was teaching free karate classes at the university to people in the community. So I went to the Bayside Projects and the Kennedy Park Projects and started a karate programme for young kids, because I found out through my years of practice that martial arts serve to instil a certain measure of self-respect and self-discipline in a person. And if you have respect for yourself, then you're going to respect your elders, you are going to respect the people in your neighbourhood. That's what a revolutionary does if a revolutionary loves the people. I try to put that into practice.

In 1974 I became involved in opening up the Red Star North Bookstore which was loosely associated with SCAR. You are going to see evidence about this bookstore. You are going to see a photograph of the bookstore and myself. It isn't hard for the government to get photographs. The store was under police surveillance all the time. We sold books on labour history, Black history, revolution, feminism. We had a free books for prisoners programme. We mailed books free to prisoners who requested it. We maintained correspondence with prisoners. As I said, the bookstore was under surveillance. If you're going to oppose this government on any level, you're going to have to live with the fact that the police are going to be breathing down your neck and listening to your telephone.

But it didn't stay at that level. It accelerated it intensified. I became aware of the existence of a police death squad, a police assassination squad that had been formed in the Portland Police Department. I had several sources of information for that: 1) it was on the street that myself and my comrade Tom Manning were to be targeted, along with other ex-prisoners by this assassination team; 2) I was told this by a guy named Stevie Poullen, who, it would be revealed at city council hearings, was also on that list. Stevie Poullen's not coming in to talk about it because he got a .357 in his head. Some people say he put it there. Other people speculated that cops put it there; 3) there were city-wide hearings held in city hall to investigate the allegations of a death squad. SCAR demonstrated at city hall to bring as much public attention as we could to what was happening. At that demonstration a woman named Linda Colman came up to me and introduced herself. It was the first time in my life I had seen her. She's a government witness now.

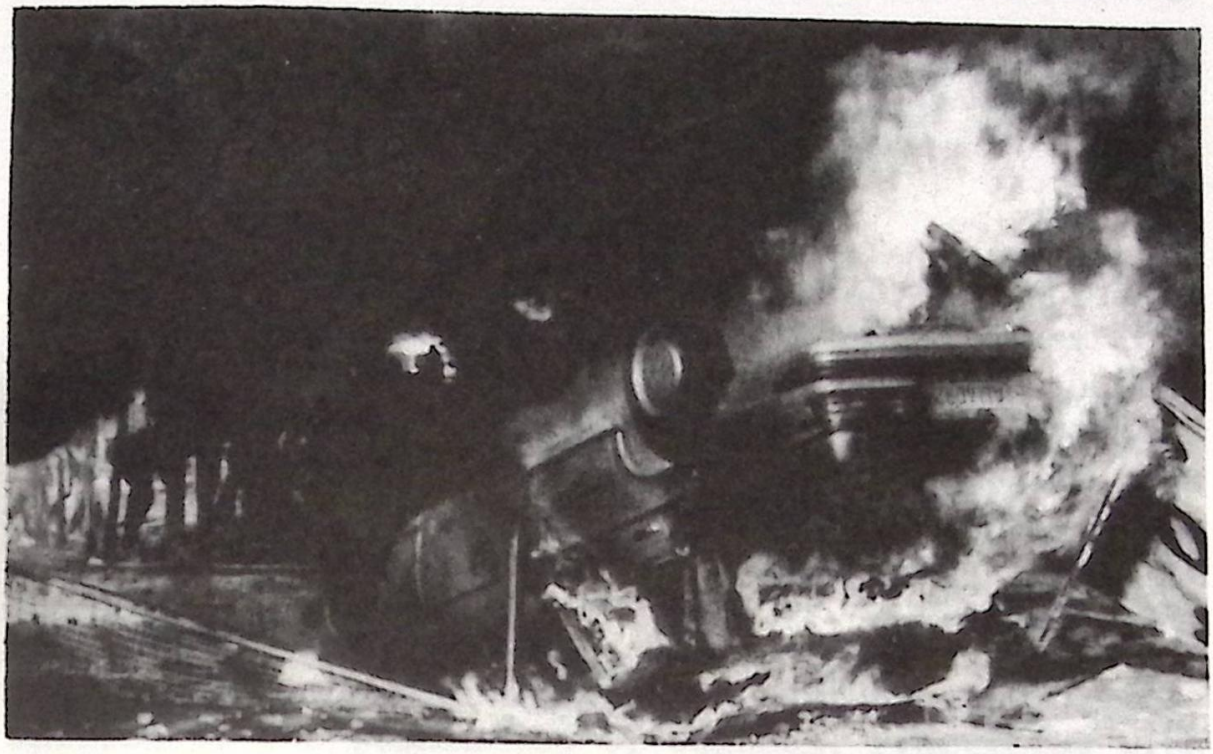
We were looking to see if we could find justice. What we got was a whitewash and a cover-up. A lot of cops were implicated at those hearings and ultimately only one was indicted for solicitation to murder.

Another one of the cops who was involved in this was named Bertrand Surphes. This becomes important in terms of the bookstore, because the bookstore came under attack. The bookstore became a focus for the cops to zero in on. Then there was an incident where one of the workers in the bookstore was attacked by two men who slipped in the door. She was brutally beaten and she was raped. She told me it was the police. It was hard for me to fathom it could anybody else. Because they're parked across the street. They were always watching us.

There were other incidents. The bookstore was ransacked. Books were destroyed. Posters were ripped up. The little money that was there was taken. There were death threats, both on the phone at SCAR and through mailings that contained Ku Klux Klan and Nazi slogans. There were arrests. A squad of police officers came burrowing through the front door one day, and who should be in front of the squad and the arresting officer but Bertrand Surphes, who had been implicated in the death squad. Why was I arrested? Because after searching the bookstore, they say they found a can of beer that had its top open in the back room. Naturally, the judge threw that out. That was a bogus arrest to come in and hassle us and close the store and threaten us.

I took this as a real serious threat, not only to our political work but to our lives. I started to carry a gun. Now I'm in a bad situation. I'm a convicted felon. I sold seven dollars of marijuana, so a gun is going to get me ten years in a federal penitentiary. But I got a choice between that or getting one of these cop's bullets in my head. I didn't think it was a choice so I started to carry a gun. I always thought it was a very wise move. Remember, this is the early 1970s. There's a larger framework involved.

I became familiar with COINTELPRO - counterintelligence programmes of the FBI. The target of the COINTELPRO programmes were primarily organisations and individuals that worked for social change and opposed government policy. Their tactics included everything from harassment, surveillance and wiretaps to assassinations. One of the earliest targets was Martin Luther King. The government has always targeted any leadership that's ever risen up either in the civil rights struggle involving Black people or human rights struggle. Over 40 members of the Black Panther Party were killed during this period of COINTELPRO activities. Dozens of Indian activists were murdered. Vietnam Veterans Against the War was a COINTELPRO target as was the Puerto Rican Independence Movement.



This was the climate of the time. I did not want to remain vulnerable to police attack, their agents, their provocators. So I made a decision that I was going to continue my work away from the eyes and ears of the government. I call that going underground. Sometimes people call it clandestine. Of course I had to take these police attacks into consideration. But I will tell you, I'll be totally up front about it, it merely accelerated what I had wanted to do for a period of time. I ultimately would have gone underground.

The reason that I went under was because I wanted to contribute to building a revolutionary resistance movement in this country that has the ability to defend itself at any stage of its development, at any stage of history, regardless of what particular activity it is engaged in at the time. You cannot expose all the organisations of a political movement to the government. Some of them have to be away from its eyes and ears. I wanted to help build a movement that would grow and sustain itself. A movement is always subject to attack at any point in time. And I wanted to help build something that could sustain any attack.

4
On Trial

I freely admit to being part of a revolutionary movement. The government cannot tolerate serious opposition to its own criminal policies, so they do what the prosecution are trying to do here. They want to criminalise my life, my values, and the organisations that they allege I've been part of.

They begin to do this in the indictment by talking about "manner and means". Use of fictitious identification, renting houses with names other than your own, using public telephones to communicate, private mailboxes. The possession of weapons. Practicing with weapons. Monitoring police activities. If you look at the context in which things are done, I think that in this case you are going to find out this is not criminal activity. You know, when I went to Vietnam I was 20 years old, I couldn't vote and I could not have a legal drink. So I did what a lot of other GI's did. I had a fake ID, so I could have a beer and celebrate the idea that I might get killed in another year to defend this system.

More to the point, if you want to stay alive and survive, you have to utilise these methods. In Nazi

Germany if they hadn't had secret meetings (I'm talking about Jews, labor leaders, communists, gay people everybody who the Nazis went after), if they hadn't used false passports, if they didn't carry a gun now and then, do you think more would have gotten killed? When the Nazis spread their fascism into France and you had a French government that collaborated with the Nazis, how far do you think the resistance would have got, if they had not utilised these types of methods? It had a hard enough time as it was.

And the same could be said for South Africa today that murders and tortures its opponents. They want you to carry a pass in South Africa today. So you are going to have to find something else if you don't want to end up in one of those South African prisons. Or the sanctuary movement today, which utilises churches to move refugees through the country from Central America, refugees from wars that the United States is responsible for creating. Think for a minute about a woman named Harriet Tubman, who used to come through Springfield up to Amherst and into Canada. She carried a gun and she used a name other than her own and she used so-called safe houses. That is what the underground railroad was. How many of those slaves do you think would have made it if she hadn't done that? Part of what they were fleeing from was the Fugitive Slave Act. It was the law at the time.

I would like to digress for a minute and tell you why I'm choosing to defend myself. I was underground for ten years. It's not easy for me to stand here before you now and speak in what is essentially a public forum. What I'm simply trying to do is to add my voice to that of millions of others who cry freedom from South Africa to Central America to the south Bronx in New York. They don't have much choice about it, and I don't have much choice. I'd rather not be here. But since I am, I want to defend myself and I want to defend the issues that I think are important. And the important issue here is the issue of human rights. I see that as a central part of this trial.

The prosecutor mentioned one of his snitch witnesses comes from Harvard University, and of course the prosecutor went to the same school. I can tell you that I never went to any prestigious law school. He has indicated that he is going to bring a computer in here to put on his table. You will not see any computer over there on my table. And I don't have a squad of FBI agents running my paperwork around for me. I do all my preparation from a prison cell. I'm one of over a hundred political prisoners in the United States which the United States refuses to recognise.

The judge has said I don't have to ask questions I don't have to testify, I don't have to cross-examine. But I do want to defend myself and I do want to participate in certain parts of this trial. What he didn't tell you is that he decides what it is I can do. I have a defence, but you are not necessarily going to hear it or see it. He makes that decision. That's the power he has. But if you don't hear it, it's not that I haven't tried.

You will see me angry in this trial. That anger will never be directed towards you. My anger is reserved for the government and some of the agents and witnesses who they're going to bring in here.

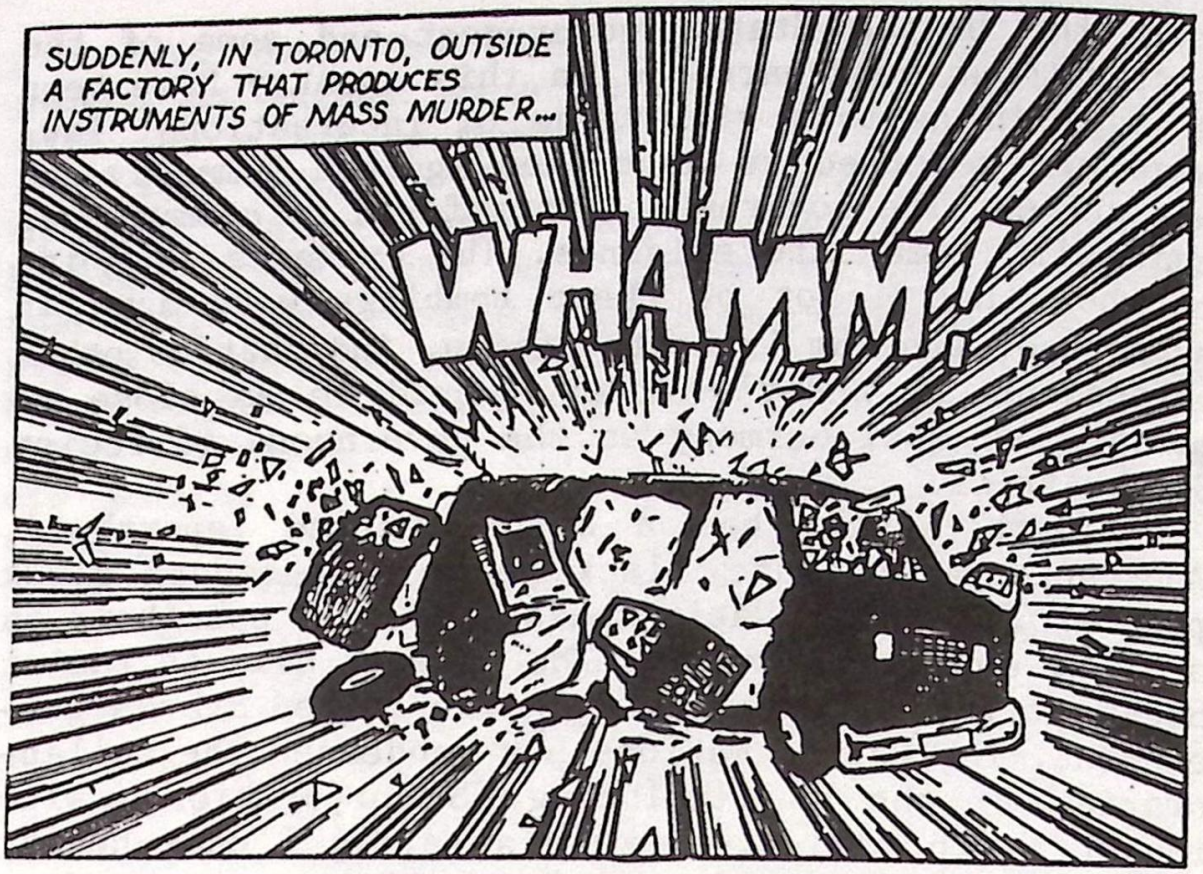
Now, over the years, after Vietnam, I felt I needed to engage in a self-education project. You will see a lot of material that was seized by the FBI. They seized everything in the house, including my kids' report cards, and a copy of the Bill of Rights. I monitored and collected a lot of data, research, fiscal data, articles documenting human rights violations in South Africa, Central America, human rights violations by this government. I collected information on military contractors; who they are selling their weapons to and how much they are getting for it. I tried to document every incident I could find where Black and Latino people were murdered by the police. And if I stood here now and started giving you each one of those names, I would still be standing here next week. I kept a file on the numbers of homeless and hungry and the numbers of unemployed. And there was a special notebook which I kept on prisons, documenting the guard murders of prisoners and, in particular, political prisoners. I documented civil rights violations and violations of international law.

The judge has said that you are triers of facts and I think you should look at the facts. But I'm going to ask you to look for something else. I'm going to ask you to look for the truth. Over the years, directly and indirectly, I have become aware

that the United States government and some of the corporations headquartered in this country have been engaged in serious violations of international law, what are referred to as crimes against humanity and war crimes. The government has refered to communiques that will come into evidence. The evidence is going to show that a lot of these bombings were done in support of freedom in South Africa. And that no other government in today's modern world is as close to being like Nazi Germany as the government of racist South Africa.

South Africa has a system called apartheid. Apartheid means hate Black people; segregate Black people. The United Nations has condemned apartheid as a crime against humanity. The closest ally to racist South Africa in this world is the United States government. The United Nations has condemned the collaboration of the US, including US corporations, with racist South Africa. There's a saying I once heard: "The blood of oppression in South Africa runs as deep as the mines". Because we know who works in the mines in South Africa - who mines the gold and diamonds - Black people. They do it for next to nothing. They do it for starvation wages. Because they've had their land stolen from them. Black people are 80% of the population and they don't even have the right to vote.

There was an action carried out by the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit in 1976 against Union Carbide. It was right after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa in which 1,000 or more Black people, mainly women and children, were gunned down by South African troops. It started off as a student demonstration. People demanding to preserve their language and culture were shot in the back by the South African troops. The very first to be killed was Hector Pieterson, a young African boy. He was 14 years old. Why were they gunned down? Because they were all in the streets of Soweto, a Black township, with their fists in the air shouting "Amandla Amandla" - power that brings freedom. They want their country back. They want their land back.And they want their rights.



The Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit attacked the property of the Union Carbide Corporation while the US government was collaborating with the South African police and troops to kill 1,000 Black people. I'm here to support the liberation struggle in South Africa; these prosecutors are here to defend the interests of the United States government in South Africa. The United Freedom Front also paid a visit to the South African Airways office, a front for an office of the South African government in New York City. They did it there after there was a massacre in Lesotho, next to South Africa, where South African troops had gone in and gunned down Black activists. That's called a massacre. We're going to learn in this trial what the word massacre means.

American corporations are the legs upon which the racist system in South Africa walks. Troops in South Africa ride in General Motors trucks that are fuelled by Mobil Oil Corporation. So do the entire police and military system. In South Africa, those prisons, that pass system, all of that is computerised by corporations like IBM. The blood of innocent people must stir your conscience. I think that you

ought to ask yourself a question throughout this trial, and that is: who are the real criminals? Those who support the racist system in South Africa or those who are opposed to it?

I believe that the evidence will show that there is a war in Central America and that it is a US sponsored war. This trial's going to have a lot to do with bombings. The United Freedom Front took responbility for bombings of US military contractors and facilities. The evidence is going to show the UFF objected to the United States shipping bombs and armaments to the government of El Salvador which uses them to slaughter its own people. One of these particular bombs is a 750 pound fragmentation bomb. The prosecutor referred to 600 pounds of dynamite. This is one bomb that weighs 750 pounds. It's dropped by an A-37 Dragon Jet made by General Electric. That was also used in Vietnam. They're anti-personnel bombs. They explode before they hit the ground. That's not designed to destroy property as much as it's designed to kill people. And while we're standing here, there is a corporation up in Burlington, Vermont - General Electric - that is making machine guns that's going on this aircraft. The guns that the peasants in El Salvador refer to as flying death squads. The issue of state terrorism is going to be a central issue that comes up during this trial.

A lot of SM/JJ bombings were done in support of Puerto Rican independence and the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners. All national struggles in which people are trying to be free are close to my heart, but the struggle for Puerto Rico to be free is especially close to me. I have three young girls and I used to tell them bedtime stories about Puerto Rican patriots like Lolita Lebron and her companeros who spent a quarter of a century in US prisons because they dared to take the struggle for a free Puerto Rico to the heart of the beast, right here in the United States. Half of the Puerto Rican population

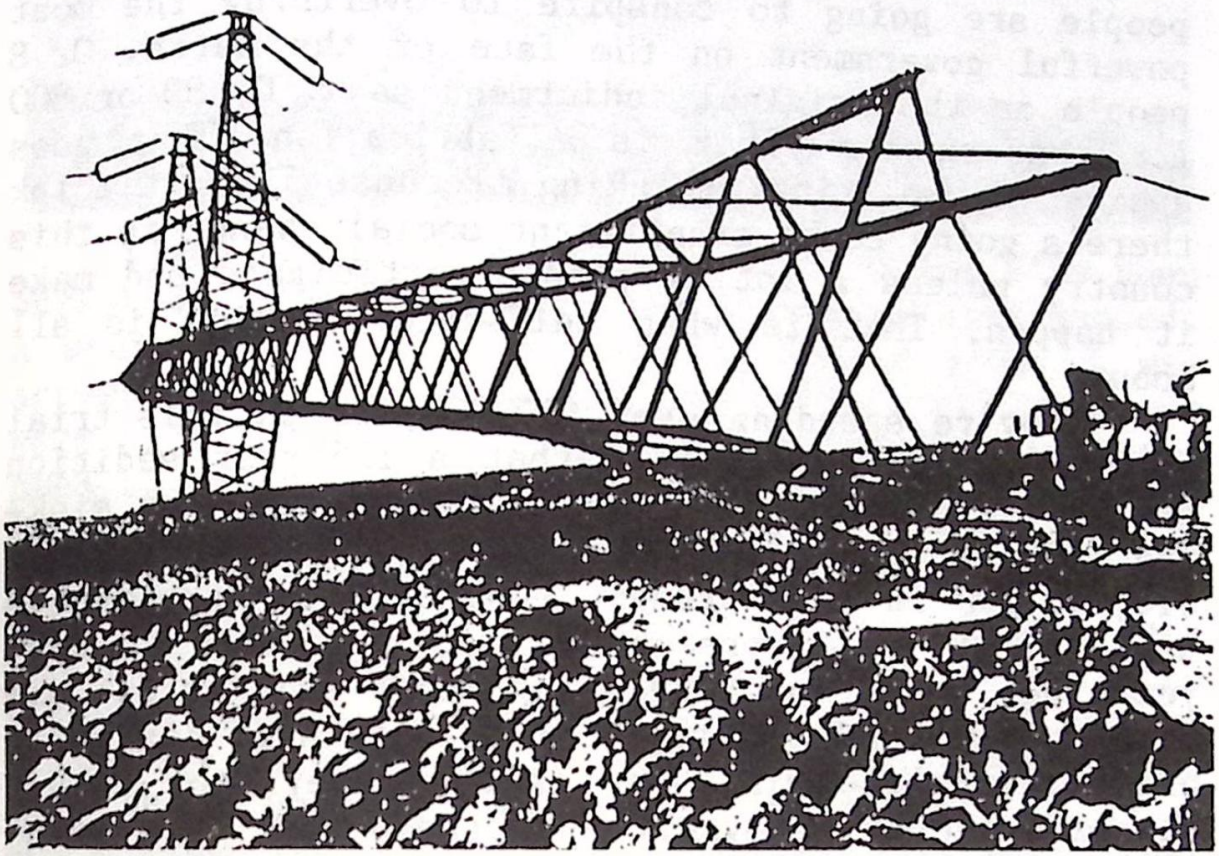
have been forced by economic conditions to migrate to this country. The American flag flies over Puerto Rico. While you think it may represent freedom here, it does not represent freedom to the vast majority of Puerto Rican people.

The United States invaded Puerto Rico 90 years ago and it has been militarily occupied since then. There are bases all over the nation of Puerto Rico. The United Nations has ruled that Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States and that colonialism is illegal under international law. I believe that it is inhumane by any standard to subject another country or another people to what you want to do. The United Nations has ruled that Puerto Rico is being held illegally, illegally occupied therefore it has the right to resist that occupation. And I support that. You are going to see evidence in this trial about the police murders of unarmed Puerto Rican men right here in Springfield. That is something the Sam Melville/ Jonathan Jackson Unit felt was necessary to respond to. You will see evidence of the abusive treatment of Puerto Rican political prisoners held in the United States.

Like me you probably hold high value and respect for the principles on which the American Revolution was founded, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. But as I look back at those documents and what they represent, I ask myself, I do not remember anybody conferring on this government or its military or police apparatus the right to engage in violations of human rights in the name of the American people. When I went to school as a kid I would do the pledge of allegiance all the time. But, based on my experience since then, I don't feel like I owe any blind allegiance to a system that is going to perpetuate this kind of suffering of people throughout the world - including here within the United States. I mentioned earlier that the question of killer cops is going to be an important issue in this trial. When officers of the New York City Police

Department beat to death a young Black community artist named Michael Stewart, the United Freedom Front responded by supporting the Black communities in their struggle to stop killer cops.

There's little difference between a lynching by the KKK and a police officer who puts a bullet in the head of a young Black man, and it happens time and time again. And lest we think the Klan is not active, I expect that we're going to have a close look at the New York Police Department during this trial. I think what you are going to see is the largest Ku Klux Klan chapter in the Northeast.



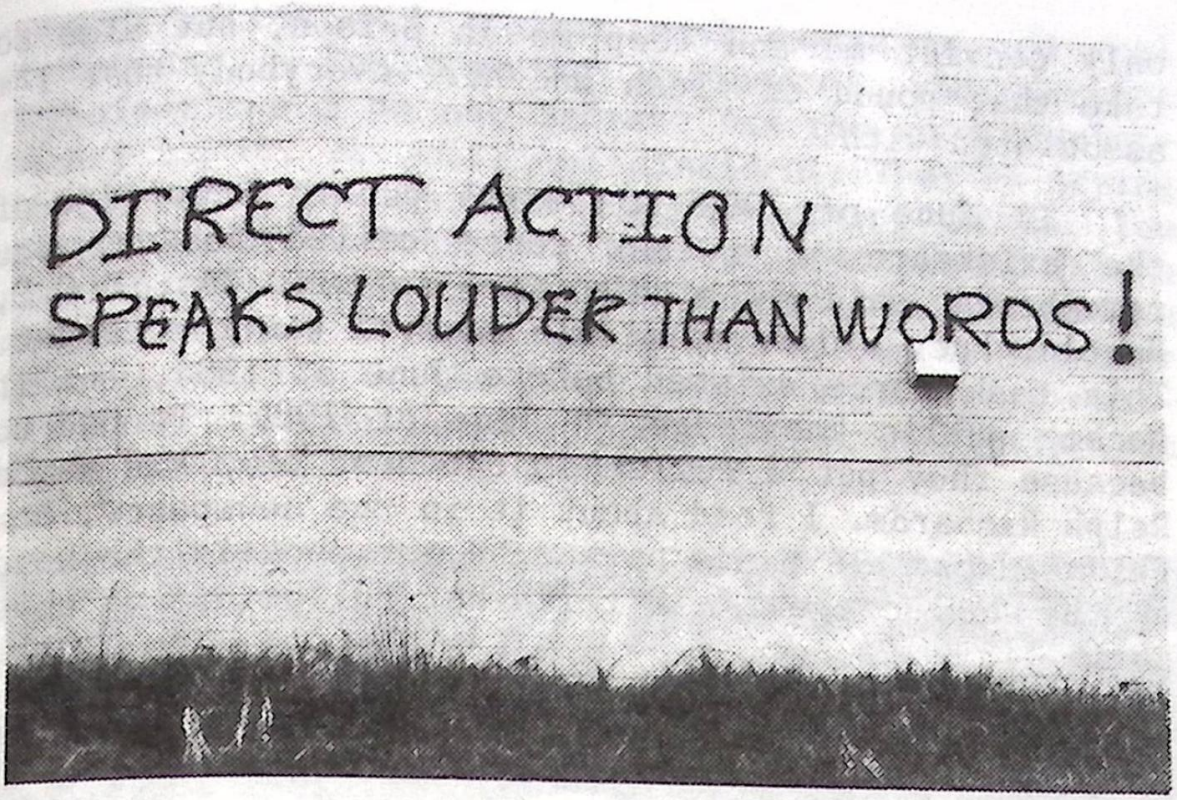
The sedition law and the RICO law was addressed earlier and I now want to address them briefly. Sedition laws in general have always been designed to break what has been a tradition of resistance and political activity in this country, whether it was Native American people resisting the theft of their land or slaves trying to be free, or union leaders or anti-war activists. And this specific sedition law, seditious conspiracy, has been almost exclusively used against Puerto Rican Independenistas, that is advocates for a free and independent Puerto Rico.

Now the government has expanded its use to try and target those who support Puerto Rican independence. You are going to see very clearly that I support Puerto Rican independence with all my heart. And I don't support it idly, I support it actively, I participate in the struggle.

The government wants you to believe that three people are going to conspire to overthrow the most powerful government on the face of the earth. Or 8 people as the original indictment says. Or 80 or 800 for that matter. That is a fabrication. That goes against my political thinking. Because I don't think there's going to be significant social change in this country unless a lot of people participate and make it happen. That is what self-determination is all about.

They're spending over $10,000,000 on this trial to try to convince people that a 125 year sedition statute is going to keep the United States from sinking. What they are really looking for with their $10,000,000 is a government show trial. A propaganda trial. Sort of a version of what they used to have years ago where you take a dissident and you put him in a wooden stock and try to humiliate him, denigrate him, criminalise him. This is what they want to use the prosecution of myself and others for. As a warning to other political dissidents, to organisers, to revolutionaries. Against those who challenge a government conducting their bloody business as usual.

They want to see to it that I spend the rest of my life in prison. They want to make me bleed. One of the ways they do that is they go not just after me, but they go after everybody whom I'm associated with - friends, family, supporters. I've had friends subpoenaed before a grand jury that refused to testify; refused to give up information. They have been jailed. That's called political internment. Because you're jailed without a trial.



I was arrested in November 1984. Since I've been arrested, I've been beaten and I've been stun gunned. A stun gun is like an electric cattle prod. I was arrested with my wife and our three children, who were 4, 6 and 8 at the time. Government agents attempted to bribe my eight year old daughter at the time. She wouldn't take a bribe. So they put her in a room with FBI agents and state police and they threatened her. There was a time when these agents sitting here and their colleagues were hanging from trees in the cemetery when my grandma died, because they thought that they could pick up on my whereabouts, because they think that my family is going to turn me in. I don't come from that kind of people. We don't turn each other in. We do not turn over for this government.

The treatment of the children at the time of our arrest, and particularily the children of Thomas and Carol Manning, who were grabbed and held for two months incommunicado, separate from their family members who pleaded to have them released and ultimately they were released after widespread attention was brought on the case and after a hunger strike. What I'm getting at is the abuses that the government is prepared to carry out in an attempt to not

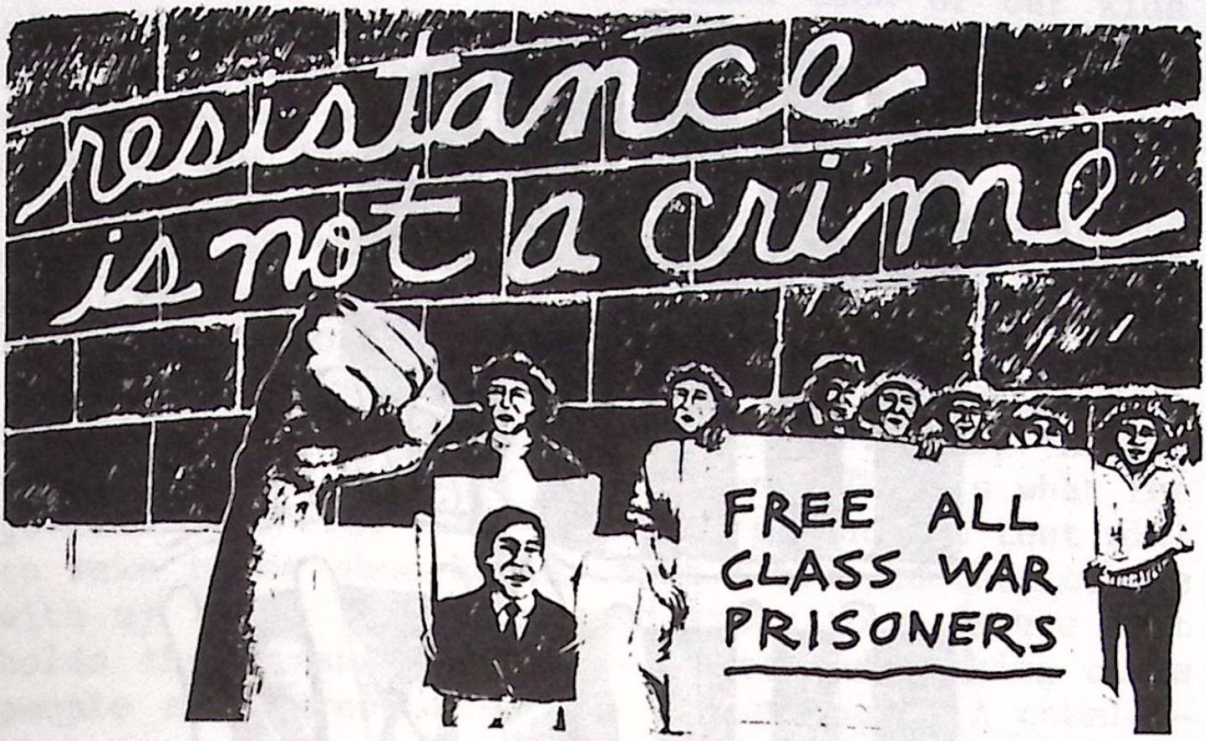
only convict me and keep me in prison, but also to take that pound of flesh and hurt everybody that I'm associated with.

In June of 1984 it became public knowledge of the existence of a task force called BosLuc. You remember I said my middle name is Luc. Bos, B O S, Boston, Luc, L U C, my middle name. I was the target. This task force existed before June of 1984, but it became public knowledge in June of 1984. It had to because they put a bullet in the head of a kid named Ralph Richards. I read about it in the newspaper. How this kid had his hands up and he got shot in the head by the BosLuc agents. I felt that bullet had my name on it.

There's another reason for this prosecution and what the government is doing that sheds some light on their intent. Not only do they want to keep me in prison, but they want to put my wife in prison. If you listened to the prosecution earlier, you heard them characterise our marriage and our love for each other as if it were some kind of criminal enterprise. You know I'm separated from my three young daughters by prison walls and my wife brings them in to visit me, but the government isn't going to be satisfied until those three kids are orphans. That's the nature and extent of the punishment that they want to put out to anyone who even thinks of challenging this government's policies, particularly where I am so outspoken about it.

It's hard to believe that those government prosecutors are going to build their careers on the backs of political prisoners and children who are left without their parents. But that's what they're doing. I want to just briefly address the issue of the RICO charges. Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organisations. I can't tell you how insulted I am that these prosecutors charge me with being a racketeer. That law was passed in the 1970s and it was specifically

passed to be used against real gangsters and real racketeers. Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organisations I do not believe has the word revolutionary in it, or political dissident. They're trying to bend the law is what they're trying to do. You cannot be a revolutionary and be a racketeer. It's a contradiction. It is either one or the other. You cannot support freedom struggles in South Africa or Central America or the Black nation within this country from the foundation of a criminal enterprise. It can't be done. History shows that.



I'm neither profit oriented nor drug oriented. In 21 years of political activity I've never done anything for personal gain or profit. Nothing. That has never been part of my motivation or intent. The government wants to charge that bombing the office of the South African government is an act of racketeering? A bombing that was done in response to a masacre in South Africa and to support the struggle for freedom there. This is an act of racketeering? No, it's an expression of support for freedom. It is that simple. If we could have Nelson Mandela here today, or Winnie Mandela, would they think attacking an office of the racist government of South Africa is an act of racketeering?

The government stood up for 45 minutes essentially saying nothing more than that I'm a criminal and a racketeer and part of a criminal enterprise. That's not true. And I want to refute it and I want to put as much evidence in as I can to refute it. I want to participate in certain parts of this trial to refute it. If you want to see a corrupt and criminal enterprise let's take a good look at the highest levels of the United States government and what some of these military contractors are doing. Then we'll see what real corruption and criminality looks like.

These prosecutors do not represent the American people. They represent the government. And, since Vietnam, I have always made an important distinction between the two. I hope that you will. They're here to present certain interests and I'm here to defend certain issues. I began this by talking about children. The children I began talking about were my own grandparents. They were merely children when they had

to go to work in those mills and shoe factories. My grandfather was 13 years old. That and my own experience I've outlined to you have left a deep imprint on me. And it does not leave me with any criminal intent or a criminal mind. It leaves me with the heart of a revolutionary, somebody who's committed to social justice.

My wife and I have a marriage. We don't have a criminal enterprise. I love her very much. We have three daughters. My oldest daughter is going to be 13 day after tomorrow. We named each of our kids after their grandmothers, one of whom is sitting here now, and one after their great grandmother. Because we are proud of our working class roots and we're proud of our families.

I will remember the children of Vietnam, the suffering of those children who I saw there. But I also remember the beauty of their smiles. And I never have lost sight of what human potential there is in people. This is at the heart of what motivates me - my intent, my purpose, my goals, my values, this is where it's at. It's my committment. This is what the government fears. That I didn't go back to that mill to make those shoe heels, that I took another course with my life. I have a committment to a future that holds the human potential of poor and working class people as a great asset to be developed. A committment to a future in which no child will ever have to suffer from racism, poverty or war. A future where justice brings peace for our children and generations to come.

Raymond Luc Levasseur
10th January 1989
United States Courthouse
Springfield, Ma.

5 Revolution

Throughout history, the rich and powerful have always labelled anyone who has opposed them as "criminals" or "terrorists". In this country, we have to only look across the water to Northern Ireland or remember the 1984/85 miners' strike to see this happening. To struggle for better wages, decent housing, a few more crumbs from their table is a "criminal" activity in the eyes of our rulers. It goes without saying that we reject these labels. We believe that this society has nothing to offer us apart from the old story of oppression and exploitation. To struggle aaginst this is not "criminal" - it's common sense, it's protecting our class interests.

Ray Luc Levasseur was labelled a "criminal" by the US government because he fought back against capitalist society. He was not prepared to slave for a pittance. He was not prepared for someone to get rich from his labours. So he was called "criminal". What he actually did was a direct result of his beliefs and his determination to struggle for a better world. A world where people come before profit and equality exists for all regardless of race, creed, sex, age or

sexuality.

This drove Levasseur, along with others (the group known as the Ohio 7), to undertake some actions that we disagree with. Bombs on their own do little to change this society or strengthen mass struggle against capitalism. This type of activity inevitably leads to isolation and often results in elitism. As one ex-bomber said: "Because you're illegal you can't keep contact with the people at the base...Suddenly you're a marginal figure because you can't show up anywhere".

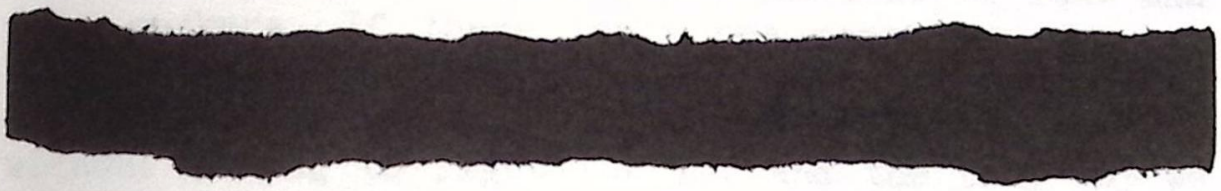
The only force that can change this society is the collective power of the working class, not the power of a few bombs. But Ray Luc Levasseur himself was well aware of this. As he said: "I don't think there's going to be significant social change in this country unless a lot of people participate and make it happen". This does set him apart from other underground groups like the German Red Army Faction (RAF) who glorify in their own isolation and dismiss the working class. The politics of the RAF have more in common with egotistical adventurism than revolution.

This does not mean that we are opposed to direct action. Books and words will never change anything on their own. When the need arises, we have got to be prepared to put the boot in - and, if necessary, put it in hard. But isolated actions, however courageous and well-intentioned, should not be seen as a substitute for mass struggle. Again, we believe that Ray Luc Levasseur would agree, unlike the RAF and others. Levasseur came from a working class background. Much of his life was spent struggling within the working class: organising, demanding higher pay rises, fighting reactionary elements such as racists. These are vital tasks that have to be fought for and won.

The politics of bombs often arise from despair and defeat. It is one individual's howl against this society. Despair and defeat are common emotions for

people who believe in revolution. Capitalism seems so powerful. Working class struggle seems so limited. But this is a mistaken view. Wherever there is capitalism, there is struggle against it. Even in such a supposedly all-powerful capitalist country like the USA, there have been massive struggles by the working class: for example, the recent strikes by miners in West Virginia and aeroplane maintenance workers at Eastern Airlines. These strikes have both seen widespread solidarity and a willingness to fight back. Obviously, there have been problems and weaknesses. But these strikes show that, despite the popular view of America, wherever there is capitalism there is a working class that is forced to fight for its living.

It is because capitalism and class struggle go hand in hand that the state has a conscious strategy of isolating revolutionaries from the working class. This was the aim of the FBI's COINTELPRO programme - and Levasseur was one of their many targets. It is crucial that we fight against this strategy. One of the ways we can do this is by maintaining open organisation in the workplace and the community. Once we become isolated, then we are weaker and ineffective. This doesn't mean that we have to obey their law. We agree with Levasseur when he says "you cannot expose all the organisations of a political movement to the government". But open organisation is fundamental.



In many ways these differences are trivial. What is important is mass struggle against capitalism - and how it can be encouraged, supported and intensified. Academics can debate the technicalities of it all. But for those of us who have to live in the real world, there are more important things to be done: the fight to live, the realisation that there must be more to life than this. It is for this reason that we have printed this pamphlet - it's our small contribution to educating, informing and agitating for a mass movement against capitalism.

When Ray Luc Levasseur read out this statement from the dock, he was 48 years old. For most of his life he has fought for "a future in which no child will ever have to suffer from racism poverty or war". It's easy to criticise in theory some of what he has said and done. But it's a lot harder to struggle, in practice, against capital's domination of our lives. The struggle to change this society is a long and hard battle, and there are few easy answers. But it's a battle we cannot avoid. We only have to look around to see that revolution is the only option: pollution, poverty, militarism, the list is endless.

Our lives will continue to be existences at the beck and call of the ruling class until we take our future into our hands. We hope that this statement will help to convince some people that this is our only real option. Ray Luc Levasseur's declaration is a damning indictment of a world dominated by money and power. He has consistently fought for "the right to live life to its fullest potential". It is a right that we too are determined to fight for and achieve.

Attack International

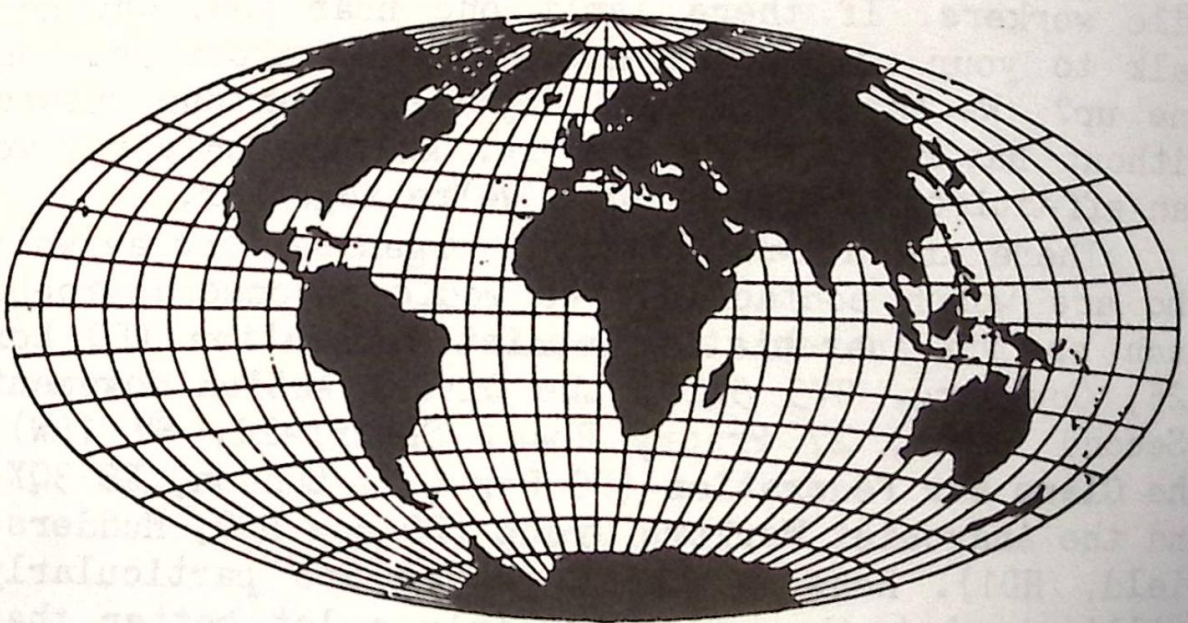
6 Organise!

Nothing will ever be changed by isolated individuals. To change this society, to live life to its fullest potential, we have to be organised together. The strongest forms of organisation are often local, either in the workplace or in the community. There are many active and determined local groups across the country, from tenants' associations to rank and file workers. If there isn't one near you, why not talk to your neighbours and workmates about setting one up? We have never got anything from our rulers without having to fight for it. And the only way we can effectively fight is when we're together.

There are a few political organisations as well who are worth contacting. We would recommend groups such as the **Anarchist Communist Federation** (PO Box 125, Coventry, CV3 5QT), the **Direct Action Movement** (Second Floor, 27 Priory Road, Sheffield, S7 1LW), the **Class War Federation** (PO Box 467, London, E8 3QX) and the **Anarchist Workers Group** (PO Box B20, Huddersfield, HD1). None of these groups are particularly brilliant, but they are certainly a lot better than nothing.

Counter-Information (Pigeonhole CI, c/o 11 Forth Street, Edinburgh) is an excellent source of news and information from all around the world. Another good source of views is **London Greenpeace** (5 Caledonian Road, London, N1). If you're interested in what's going on in North America, it's worth contacting any of the following: the **Industrial Workers of the World** (3935 N. Sheffield Avenue, Suite 202, Chicago, Il 60657, USA); **Reality Now** (PO Box 6326 Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P7, Canada); and **Fifth Estate** (PO Box 02548, Detroit, MI 48202, USA). And if you are particularily interested in prisons and prisoners' struggles get in touch with the **Anarchist Black Cross** (BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX). In America, the **Sedition Committee** have organised support for the Ohio 7 and can give more news about the case; contact them at PO Box 4690, Springfield, MA 01101, USA. And, last but not least, Ray Luc Levasseur's prison number is 10376/016 and he is currently imprisoned at FDC Hartford, Box 178, Hartford, CT 06141 0178, USA. We are sure that he would appreciate any letters.

If you're interested in reading other books about the struggle to change this society and other such gripping topics, drop a line to **AK Distribution**, who run an Anarchist Book Service from 3 Balmoral Place, Stirling, Scotland, FK8 2RD and they will send you their catalogue.



• Attack International

We believe that the present social system known as capitalism is neither reformable nor survivable. The Labour Party, the Green Party, the individualists have no solution to the numerous problems caused by capitalism, from exploitation at work to poverty at home, from pollution in the air to repression on the streets. The only solution is working class revolution: that means overturning the existing social set-up and building a new society where human need is more important than private profit. Our contribution to this struggle for a new world is the production of revolutionary propaganda: we want to undermine the lies and illusions of capitalist society and clearly show that change is not only possible, but both very necessary and desirable. In the last two years, we have published the following:-

Attack Attack Attack - a newspaper of practice and ideas, ranging from how to get the right mixture in a molly to an analysis of class society. Just send a donation for a copy.

Breaking Free - a full length cartoon book featuring the adventures of Tintin in his battles against the bourgeoisie. The 'Daily Star's' comment was simple: "Commie nutters turn Tintin into picket yob". Just send £2 for a copy of the book of the year.

The Spirit Of Freedom - this booklet tries to explain what's going on in Ireland and why it's in our interests to get the British troops out. Cut through the lies at only a £1 for a copy.

We also have a variety of posters and leaflets - send a donation and we'll send you some. Please make all cheques payable to **Attack International** and send to BM 6577, London, WC1N 3XX (all donations welcome!) Finally, if you would like more copies of this booklet, please send 30p for each copy you want plus a bit extra for postage.

Attack International

"This is how the struggle for social justice has become my life. I've gone into those factories, those mills, those fields; I've sweat for the boss and know what it's like. I was in the Army. I was in Vietnam. I had to serve this government when they required it. I've been in their jails and prisons. This is how I came to understand what I refer to as the class struggle and class conflict, and this is how I became a revolutionary."

Raymond Luc Levasseur
U.S. Courthouse
January 1989

50p

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